

# 3

Export Certification  
Manual

# Sources for Import Requirements

## *Official Communication*

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## Introduction

Official communication, which must originate from a country's National Plant Protection Organization (NPPO), is the second source that may provide a country's phytosanitary import requirements.

Official communication may be one of the following:

- ◆ Import permits
- ◆ Special authorizations
- ◆ Various types of correspondence

This section will provide guidance on using official communication. The official communication must originate from the NPPO of the importing country. The name and contact information for a NPPO may be found in the *Subsidiary Information* section of an export summary in EXCERPT.

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## Types of Official Communication

The phytosanitary certification of a commodity is based on the importing country's phytosanitary requirements. These requirements must be provided through official communication from the National Plant Protection Organization (NPPO) of the importing country. Official communication may be any of the following:

- ◆ A country's regulations
- ◆ Letters of correspondence
- ◆ Bilateral agreements
- ◆ Import permits
- ◆ Letters of authorization

The information in EXCERPT is based on official communication Export Services has received.

In most cases, ACOs will be dealing with import permits presented by an exporter. Since there are no international standards for official communication, including IPs, ACOs need to review any document presented as official communication carefully to ensure that the document is from the NPPO of the importing country.

The following information pertains specifically to IPs but can be applied to any type of official communication presented by an exporter.

While there are some exceptions, IPs are issued by the NPPO of the importing country to the importer. The name and contact information for a NPPO can be found in the *Subsidiary Section* of each *Export Summary* in EXCERPT. It is the importer's responsibility to provide a legible copy of any IP to the US exporter.

EXCERPT will differentiate between required and mandatory IPs:

- ◆ **IP is required, but not mandatory:** If an IP is required as a condition of entry EXCERPT will state:

“Import permit is required.”

While the IP is required, in this instance, the IP is not a prerequisite to issuing a phytosanitary certificate (PC). If the exporter does not present an IP under these circumstances, do not refuse to issue a PC but caution the exporter that all phytosanitary requirements may not be met and the consignment may be rejected.

- ◆ **IP is mandatory:** If the IP is mandatory, EXCERPT will state the following, or a similar statement:

“Do not issue a phytosanitary certificate unless an IP is presented.”

In this instance, ACOs cannot issue a PC unless an IP is presented and all conditions are met.



Once an exporter has presented an IP the consignment must meet the conditions stipulated on the IP and you can not use an additional declaration stating, “Import Permit not presented.”

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## Exporter Responsibility

Exporters are responsible for providing a legible copy of an import permit (IP). ACOs should not try to decipher information on an IP that is not completely legible as important information may be missed.

IPs may not be in English and can be bilingual. Bilingual information is acceptable as long as one of the languages is English. **If the IP is not in English it is the exporter's responsibility to provide a translation of the entire IP.** ACOs and Export Services are not responsible for translating foreign language documents. In order to ensure that all requirements are met and that the validity of the document can be ascertained the entire document must be translated. If the exporter does not provide a complete translation of the IP do not proceed until a translation is provided. A copy of the IP with its translation (if appropriate) must be kept as supporting documentation with any certificate that is issued.

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## Verifying the Validity of Documentation

When verifying whether a document is an IP, or other type of official communication, look for the following:

- ◆ Name of the NPPO should be on the document. This may be included in an official seal.
- ◆ If the document specifies requirements other than phytosanitary requirements, such as quality, human health, or animal health requirements, the document may not be from the NPPO. If the document does not address phytosanitary issues it is probably not from the NPPO. For example, if one of the requirements is that specific radiation levels can not be exceeded the document is not an IP.
- ◆ Not all countries issue IPs in English. For example, if an IP is presented as having been issued by the Mexican NPPO and it is in English, the document is not an IP. Mexico issues their IPs in Spanish.
- ◆ IP number: there should be an IP serial number. Other types of official communication may be numbered.
- ◆ Date of issuance.
- ◆ Date IP is valid through. Not all IPs will have a date of expiration.
- ◆ Name of importer.
- ◆ Name of commodity and, possibly, intended use, e.g. seeds for propagation.

- ◆ The IP should reference the origin of the commodity as the United States, unless, the commodity is a re-export. If a foreign origin commodity was not safeguarded while in the US the IP may have to reference the origin as the US and the foreign country the commodity originated from.
- ◆ Lists phytosanitary requirements.

If there are any questions concerning the validity of a document ask Export Services to verify the document. ACOs must follow the chain of communication. Refer to [Table 2-1-1 on page 2-1-13](#).

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## Official Communication vs. EXCERPT

The phytosanitary requirements specified in official communication, generally, will take precedence over any information in EXCERPT. Unfortunately, due to the fact that no standard exists for any type of official communication, including IPs, ACOs must use their own judgement when deciding if all of the requirements on an IP supersede the information in EXCERPT and if it lists all of the phytosanitary requirements.

Some factors to consider are:

- ◆ If the requirements mirror those listed in the Product Requirements section of EXCERPT, but are not exactly the same, follow the instructions in the official communication.
- ◆ If the requirements are drastically different than those listed in the *Product Requirements* section of EXCERPT contact Export Services through the appropriate chain of communication. Refer to [Table 2-1-1 on page 2-1-13](#).
- ◆ If the broad, general requirements in the *Restricted Products* section of EXCERPT are not addressed in the official communication, such as freedom from soil, the commodity must meet the requirements in the *Restricted Products* section.
- ◆ Contact Export Services, as necessary.